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U.S. 'Aids' Soviets To Business Secrets

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Changes in U.S. intelligence policy in the last decade have made it easier for Soviet agents to steal technological information from American businesses, a former FBI agent told a crowd of 300 Wednesday during the opening session of a two-day symposium in Naples on terrorism and subversion.

"The denigration of the U.S. intelligence service in the 1970s aided the KGB (Soviet intelligence service) more than anything in the last four decades," said J. Raymond Wannall.

HE SPOKE during the National Intelligence Symposium at the Beach Club Hotel. Today's session is being held at the Naples Depot.

"There is a concentrated effort by the Soviets to get next to U.S. industrialists in order to beg, borrow or steal corporate secrets," said Wannall, a retired assistant director of the FBI and a member of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, hosts of the symposium.

An agreement reached with the

Soviets during the Nixon administration allowed them to open a consulate in San Francisco, which now serves as a West Coast intelligence center, he said.

Another pact opened about 40 U.S. deep-water ports to Soviet ships, he said, allowing Soviet sailors to roam the port cities almost at will.

THE SITUATION, however, seems to be changing, he said.

"In the past couple years, we've overcome our country's tendency to be self-destructive in areas of intelligence," Wannall said.

Situations in Iran, Cambodia and Central America have emphasized the idea of intelligence as a first-line of defense, he said.

The Soviet Union has a "voracious appetite for technological data," he said. Our open society

makes that information readily available, he added.

"They outgun us in the number of intelligence officers, the size of the military and the number of weapons," he said, "but we still have technological superiority."

The principal targets of technological espionage are computers, micro-electronics, lasers and optic fibers, he said.

The theft of such materials, he said, allows the Soviet Union "to leapfrog time and expense" in developing their own technological systems.

THE MAJOR solution to the theft of technology is the education of the business community, he said. The FBI has programs to alert businessmen to the signs and prevention of such loss of information.

American courts have been very supportive in handing out appropriate sentences when cases involving technological theft have been prosecuted, he said.

Meanwhile, the United States also is engaging in similar activities in Eastern Bloc countries, a fact Wannall doesn't apologize for.

"Espionage is not a chess game," he said. "Of course we're doing it. And if the Soviets had an open society like we do, we'd be much more successful."